

Agriculture --- Florida's Opportunity

Conducted by W. E. Pabor

PRELUDE.

"The sun, with one eye, vieweth all the world."
—Shakespeare.

"Then sinks the nebulous star we call the sun."
—Tennyson.

"The farmers are the founders of civilization."
—Daniel Webster.

"Heap high the farmer's wintry hoard!
Heap high the golden corn!
No richer gift has autumn poured
From out her lavish horn."

—Whittier.

"In the age of Acorus, antecedent to Ceres and the royal ploughman Triptolemus, a single barley-corn had been of more value to mankind than all the diamonds that lay in the mines of India."
—Brooks.

"Spake full well, in language quaint and olden,
One, who dwelleth by the castled Rhine
When he called the flowers, so blue and golden,
Stars, that in earth's firmament do shine."
—Longfellow.

The crop on an acre grove of tangerines, near Orlando, was sold this season on the trees for \$1,750. This shows Florida soil is good for something, and is probably the largest amount of money thus far obtained from a single acre.

Reports from California indicate that next year's shipment of oranges will fall off at least 1,250 carloads. This is the estimate made by the Redlands Citrograph, which means nearly a quarter of a million silver dollars loss to orange growers.

A writer in the Palm Beach News advocates the culture of the mango in Dade, St. Lucie and Brevard Counties; but a near market is needed for so perishable a fruit, of which the general public know but little and for which their taste must be educated up to.

Two hundred and sixty crates of eggplant, shipped at one time by one person at West Palm Beach, would seem to imply a large area cultivated by the shipper. The crop about that vicinity is said to be unusually good this season.

De Soto County was not represented at the Tampa fair by any of its products; but its editors were in force at the banquet on the opening night. Six papers, all published in the county, and five of their hay-seed editors put in an appearance, one of them showing a collection of sandspurs on his pantaloons legs, as if he had been astray en route to the big hotel.

The farmers about Hastings are preparing for an extensive planting of Irish potatoes for a spring crop. Several hundred acres of new land have been plowed for this purpose.

The marsh grass lands near Savannah are to be utilized and the wiry grass, heretofore held to be useless, is to be transformed into a useful product, though just how or what the outcome, does not appear, unless fiber of some sort. As three prominent editors, one in New York, one in Philadelphia and one in Chattanooga are the principal promoters of the project, perhaps printing paper may result from the experiment.

An interesting and instructive bulletin on okra, its culture and uses, has been issued by the United States Department at Washington, as Farmers' Bulletin, No. 232. In the North only one crop can

be grown in a year, but along our Gulf coast country it is somewhat of a perennial, and gumbo soup is in evidence all round the rolling year.

Wauchula holds up its end of the orange growers' boast that De Soto County is the banner one of the State, as far as the golden fruit is concerned. The shipments of the season will reach one hundred thousand boxes. Good for the Wauchula district and the town, which bids fair to rival Bartow on the north and Arcadia on the south border line. And the Advocate, over which Brother Goolsby so ably presides, is a splendid advocate of this section of grand old De Soto.

Seven crops of alfalfa in one season since April seems an extraordinary yield for Florida. In the far West only three, as a general thing, can be had. But the editor of the Leesburg Commercial is authority for this seven-crop story. He further says it was raised by a man 78 years old, in connection with other crops.

In a leading editorial, the editor of the Orlando Reporter has this for his opening paragraph: "The greatest need of Florida to-day is an agricultural population. In fact, this is the crying need of our whole vast country. Millions of acres of tillable land unoccupied, and other millions farmed in huge lumps, in wasteful fashion, offer to the American citizen the biggest opportunity of the age. The soil makes men; thoroughbred men; independent men; men strong in body and in soul; men with convictions, and the ability to stand up for them—in short, men who are producers, who make financial wealth, as well as the wealth of the truest and best citizenship." The entire article was republished in the daily Tallahassee Capital, with proper credit, but the above quoted matter found its way into the editorial columns of the Times-Union, credited to the Tallahassee paper. Which goes to show that even the great Jove sometimes nods, and in snoozing, the moving finger goes astray. But every paper in Florida will indorse the sentiment expressed, except, perhaps, those vitally interested in opening up other millions of acres.

The puissant knights of old who battled bravely for their opinion as to the color of the shield set by the wayside were each in the right and the advocates of the green and the gold of the orange and grapefruit in the early market season may also be right—from their point of view. It is the middleman who is the factor in the case, as a writer in the Fruitman's Guide clearly indicates. The buyer of the fruit on the trees is eager to get the extra price it will bring before the market is glutted both with the home and Cuban product. Here is what he says: "Take an instance. I was in Fort Meade on the 22d inst. They were then starting in to clip and pack two cars of green oranges, some of them just beginning to show a little color. Of course I took them to task about it, when what was my surprise to learn that this fruit had all been sold on the trees early in the season, to be delivered when ripe! But lo and behold, the buyer had offered them 25 cents a box more for this fruit if they would clip it now rather than to wait till ripe."

Now, it may be true that such premature shipment may send to the Northern markets "oranges green as grass and bitter as gall," though we doubt the case being quite as bad as the Guide makes it out to be. But the extra 25 cents per box is a great inducement to many growers, and changes the green to gold for him. And why blame Florida for just exactly what Cuban shippers are doing?

The wise man waits, watching the market reports and, just as closely, the weather. Who knows what the Dakotas have in store for us during the next three months? The pineapple grower in Florida and the banana man on the keys or islands

sends—the one when in the first flush of coloring the other in a perfectly green state—his crop to the markets of the world, near and distant; they ripen on the road, and by the time the fruit gets to the consumer it is ready for the table.

If there is loss, on whom does it fall? Not on the grower, but the shipper who who has bought and demands an early picking, backing it up with the silver lining on the shield of traffic. If his side of it proves golden, well and good. If not, the lesson learned will, in time, cure him of the early bird and the worm business, and he may go to the other extreme.

BOSTON ON FLORIDA ORANGES.

There are many things we get from the Boston journals that are not always acceptable to the South; but once in awhile—when digestion is good, perhaps—there come down to us words that are as balm to wounded souls, so appreciative are they.

For instance, the Transcript says: "To many tastes there is no orange grown that compares with the product of Florida." Pitted against the world we stand, you see, at the head. Our people have always claimed it and so accept the verdict that comes from Boston with equanimity.

"California is our great orange producer, but though the fruit from that section is of fine quality, it does not equal the best of that which comes to us from the older source of supply, Florida." This extract is not likely to appear in the Riverside or Los Angeles papers, where the Washington Navel flourishes and is really the only good orange that comes from the Golden West.

So much for the orange. Now for the pomelo. "To some extent the taste for grapefruit is an acquired one. The high prices asked for it through a large part of the year limits consumption."

The Florida fruit easily bears comparison with that of California, when measured by quality.

Florida sends her best bow to Boston, and will continue to merit approbation along the line of citrus fruits. May the time soon come when the pomelo on the Boston breakfast table—as an appetizer—be as common and be relished as well as the time-honored dish of baked beans.

TOBACCO IN FLORIDA.

The Kissimmee Valley Gazette says that next season the growing of tobacco will be entered upon by the Peters brothers of Wisconsin, who think they have found, near Narcoossee, just the soil suited for it.

"It is the intention of these gentlemen to grow onions, cabbage and Irish potatoes during the fall and winter months, and tobacco during the spring and summer months. Mr. George Peters is both a scientist and practical gardener. Within the short period of four weeks he has made his seedbeds, sowed his seeds and transformed a neglected grassy field into a shape fitted nicely for transplanting his innumerable thousands of seedlings."

A few years ago tobacco culture was extensively engaged in about Fort Meade. There was no trouble about raising the plant, and no doubt large areas in Florida are well adapted to its culture. But in the proper curing lies the secret of commercial success, and our summer weather is a factor to be taken into consideration by those intending to enter upon its culture. Two years ago only two counties—those of Gadsden and Leon—reported growing tobacco, and perhaps next year Osceola may be added to the list. The necessity of growing under shade is a disadvantage, and only the finer Vuelta Abajo variety, possibly, will pay. Gadsden's crop in 1903 from 839 acres—under shade—was 908,522 pounds, valued at \$416,068; a little over one thousand pounds to the acre.

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Played Pretty Game and Lost

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stock, but, as it is now admitted, their connections and organization for disposing of holdings were not to be compared with those of the older companies, and as a result, judging by the price paid for their holdings, these must have accumulated rapidly.

The older companies, according to trade gossip, had carried over from the previous season large stocks bought at a much lower price than those at which the Naval Stores Export Company had been forced to take the Florida receipts and were, therefore, able to undersell it, their average price being lower than that of the newer concern.

In this way the market continued until about a month ago, when the load being carried by the Florida company became so large that again shipments were diverted to Savannah, with the result that buyers remained out of the market until a congestion of unsold rosin that had never before been equaled had accumulated in factors' hands. The amount at one time was something over 50,000 barrels.

After the market had been quoted "nothing doing" for weeks, until the quotations became almost stereotyped on the board, a break came in prices that carried all grades lower, and which ranged, on the first sale, from 65 cents on water white to \$1.95 on F. The greater cut was on the common grades, of

which by far the larger part of the receipts consisted. Again the Naval Stores Export Company came to the rescue of the market, and by buying several thousand barrels caused the market to be quoted at split prices. The second day after the break another quantity was bought at slightly higher prices, and then after some hesitancy the trade became general at an average price between the two sets of prices.

Shortly afterward came the first rumors of negotiations between the rival export interests. These negotiations were continued, all of the chief men in the factorage and the producing businesses taking part or being on the scene until the final agreement, just announced.